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You Made My Day

Chance O'Neal

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You Made My Day

Tuesdays are lazy, yet they are not:

A contradiction that stems from my desire to relax on a day that demands attention. The morning is spent in pajamas but also in the car running errands rather than in the comforts of home. It's a compromise between fantasy and reality that pushes me into the car and off to the grocery store.

Compromise took me twelve minutes on today's crossword puzzle; contradiction knocked my coffee over as I reached for my pencil.

The afternoon is spent at work, continuing a cycle that I have grown frighteningly accustomed to. Masks hide noses and mouths, so eyes have become the only contact available in my routine. I spend my time guessing customers' eye colors as they enter the store. If I'm wrong, I give a penny to the register; if I'm right, I take a nickel.

Blue? No. Green. Down a penny.

Brown. Darker than I imagined. Now I'm four cents richer.

I am up eighteen cents when a man walks in wearing nothing but a dark brown mustache above his lip. Store policy states I must hand him a mask and ask him to wear it. I contemplate for a moment if it's worth the trouble, though the cameras monitoring the entire store persuade me otherwise. He's at the gin aisle by the time I approach him with a spare in hand.

"Excuse me, sir?"

He turns, and I am taken aback by how irritated he already seems with me. Dark wrinkles cover his tanned face--he's a worker from one of the construction sites on the edge of town, judging by the orange hard hat strapped to one of the belt loops of his jeans. The request I was forming chokes its way back down my throat at his unprovoked frustration.

"Yes?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm gonna need you to

put this on," I explain, reaching out to hand him the mask. He eyes it skeptically like I was handing him a live grenade and asking him to pull the pin. I almost ask him again, but he clears his throat before I can start.

"Look kid, I don't know if you're blind or something," he says as his hand wanders through the top shelf, softly grazing the rainbow-colored glass. Suddenly, his hand closes in around the neck of a rather pricey bottle before taking it off the shelf and negotiating the cap off its top and onto the floor. His lips ensnare the spout before tilting the bottle back and letting the clear fire chase its way down his throat.

I'm left speechless as he handles the drink with ease, riding through the familiar sensations like he was greeting an old friend. There is a small part of me that wonders what it tastes like.

He doesn't seem to mind the dumbfounded look I must have on my face as he finally comes up for air, letting a small sigh of content slip through his experience. There's a hand gently pushing my raised arm down to my side before the smell of fresh gin floods my nose, and I realize that he's smiling.

"But I don't need one, bud, I'm not that ugly."

And he's gone as fast as he came, the sensors on the sliding doors shrieking as he passes through them with the stolen bottle. The alarms blast throughout the relatively empty store as I hastily rush to reset the sensors.

There's nothing to do after calling the police but to wait for them to arrive. Other customers are curious about the commotion; I lie and say it was a friend of the owner who comes in from time to time.

I put another penny into the register just as I begin to hear sirens from the parking lot.

They were blue.

I quite liked that man.

**"FRESH
GIN FLOODS
MY
NOSE,"**